

-7-

REMARKS

On November 25, 2003, Applicant filed a Reply to the Office Action Made Final and an Advisory Action in response to that filing was sent from the United States Patent and Trademark Office on December 31, 2003. In the Advisory Action the Examiner has maintained the rejection of Claims 1-4, 7-11 and 14-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) anticipated by, or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as obvious over Roy. The Examiner also indicated that Claims 5-6 and 12-13 were free of the prior art but objected to as being dependent from rejected base claims.

Applicant has canceled Claims 1-17 and 20. While not agreeing with the Examiner's rejection of these claims, Applicant wishes to speed prosecution of this application and believes that canceling these claims and adding new claims which include the limitations of previously presented Claims 5-6 and 12-13, which the Examiner has indicated are free of the prior art, will lead to issuance of this application. Applicant reserves the right to pursue these canceled claims in a continuing application.

Applicant has also amended Claim 18 to recite that the staining method is an automated method. The technique of Roy has several sequential steps which are clearly manual (p. 216 of Roy) and there is no teaching or suggestion that the manual method of Roy can be automated. Therefore, Claim 18 and Claim 19, which depends from Claim 18, as amended, are not anticipated or made obvious by Roy.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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